1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

cut down the palm tree and remove a section of bark. The girl then crushes the pith, and the boy washes and squeezes it in a trough which he has constructed, allowing the milky juice to flow into a bark container set below the trough. A fine flour settles to the bottom of this container, and the water flows off. After a long morning's work a couple will have produced a sixty or seventy pound deposit of flour. The boy pours off the last of the water and wraps up the flour in a spathe. The girl places this bundle in her net bag and carries it up the mountain path to the dwelling on her back. The division of labor in sago making is maintained in part by the belief that, if a woman should do the man's part of the process, especially that of washing and squeezing the pith, the flour would be inedible.[6]

An adolescent girl takes the responsibility for cooking part of the family meal, presiding over a fireplace of her own instead of merely helping her mother. She prepares the vegetables for soup, boils sago flour, and roasts the meat. She and the older children share the meals which she cooks, thus relieving the mother from the task of providing for the whole family. The mother generally continues to cook for herself, her husband, and the smaller children. If there are two adolescent girls in a family, they usually share one fireplace and cooperate in the cooking. A girl must keep herself supplied with firewood and water.

At adolescence boys and girls must assume new gardening duties and become more specifically associated with the gardening group, which consists of from one to three adult *brothers* and their families.[7] They take their place in the gardening group of their father or, if the father has died, of a *maternal uncle*,[8] and begin to perform adult gardening tasks with the adult men and women of the group.

[6] Mar and Gwiyap, my houseboys, broke this taboo, a circumstance which will be discussed in chapter viii.

[7] There were six gardening groups in Rumbima hamlet, headed, respectively, by (1) Wof and Marok; (2) War, Kar, and Kis; (3) Yat and Way; (4) Waramus; (5) Afok and Fokotay; (6) Kwal and Daw. Gardening groups will be discussed in more detail in chapter vi.

[8] Gwiyap and Mar joined the gardening group of Wof and Marok. Mar, in addition, had to care for a garden which had been started by an older brother who had recently died.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

of furtive looking. Both Gwiyap and Mar, whenever they met an attractive girl, could and would report her appearance in detail, including a description of her breasts and genitals, although they had apparently obeyed all the precepts of Kwoma etiquette and kept their glance averted.

Boys often start their love making with their *sisters*. All the females of one's own sib and generation are termed *sister*, whether they are patrilineal parallel cousins of various degrees, or actually unrelated. It is theoretically taboo to cohabit with any related female, but in practice it depends on how closely she is related, the taboo being the more effective the closer the relationship. The factor of proximity[14] seems to lead a boy to choose his *sisters* rather than a non-relative with whom to learn to cohabit. He has a greater opportunity for arranging trysts with girls of his hamlet, since he is normally more frequently in their presence and he is not so conspicuous when he talks to them as when he speaks to a girl of another hamlet. Furthermore he runs less risk of being severely punished if he is caught, because there is a taboo on aggression between members of the same hamlet. Finally, he can more easily trust a *sister* not to claim she has been raped than he can a girl whom he knows less well and who has no reason to protect him against the consequences. Boys apparently resolve the conflict between the incest taboos, the advantages of proximity, and the prohibitions on intra-sib aggression by choosing the girls of their hamlet who are most distantly related.[15]

Gwiyap's exploits constitute a good example of the philandering of the Kwoma adolescent. He was a lively youth just past pubescence. One evening about a month after my arrival at Kwoma, I asked him if he had ever had sexual intercourse. He looked embarrassed and said noncommittally that he did not know. His confusion led me to suspect that

[14] Owing to patrilocal residence and patrilineal descent, all the girls of the same generation in the hamlet are *sisters*.

[15] I have no information on what would happen if a girl became pregnant as a result of an affair with a *brother*. Probably she would claim that she had been impregnated by a non-relative.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

the boss gardeners normally prepare another bee to break the ground for the yam hills, although the gardening group may do this work alone. If the latter is the case, the women of the group work with the men instead of preparing the feast. Since Kwoma gardens are always on a slope, each hill is made by leveling the ground into a little terrace about a foot square. This is accomplished by means of a spadelike digging stick. When the slope is especially steep, the terraces are buttressed by a retaining wall of sticks laid one on top of the other, held on one side by the pressure of the earth and on the other by pegs stuck in the ground. These miniature retaining walls prevent the hills from being washed out by a heavy rain. The worker, with a final thrust of his digging stick into the middle of each terrace, pries open a hole large enough to receive a seed yam.

The Kwoma consider that the success of the crop depends more upon planting than upon any other part of the gardening process. Only an adult man who has become a member of *Nokwi*, the highest stage of the yam cult, may do this. They believe that if a youth or a woman should put the seed yams in the ground, the yield would be meager, hard, and unpalatable. Normally, one of the boss gardeners has attained the proper status to plant yams. If not, then the nearest patrilineal relative who is a member of *Nokwi* will perform the task in return for a share in the produce of the garden. On the night before a man is to plant yams, he shares with other members of *Nokwi* a ritual soup which is believed to be potent enough to kill a woman or child. From this time on until the yam shoots break the ground, he may not chew betel, scratch himself except with a stick, or smoke except by holding his cigarette with tweezers. If he does not carry out these rituals, it is believed that his yams will not germinate. The planter performs his task by putting the yam into the hole in the hill so that the butt is down and the head (stem) is up, and the axis roughly perpendicular to level ground. He then covers the yam with earth so that the upper end is just below the surface.

Kwoma beliefs about blood appear again to determine a

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

the hands of a sorcerer. As soon as the mother is able, she takes care of the baby and nurses it.[40] Both parents show special concern for the child until his fontanel closes,[41] as they believe that he is particularly susceptible to sorcery during this time. For this reason the mother stays at home and does not receive visitors. The father, in order to insure the child's safety during this period, does not chew betel, or scratch himself except with a stick, and he holds his cigarettes between tweezers.[42]

Under certain circumstances, when the parents do not wish to bring up an infant, they may either offer it for adoption or kill it. If a woman gives birth to a monstrosity, she disposes of it as soon as it is born. She treats one of twins in the same way. Parents may decide not to bring up a normal child when there are already several children of one sex in the family and the new baby is of the same sex. If the children are all girls, for example, there will be no one to inherit the land nor to protect and care for the parents in their old age, so the mother may offer for adoption or kill a new girl infant in order to free herself more quickly to produce another child with the hope that it be a boy. Similarly, a boy infant may be killed or offered for adoption if the previous children are all male, since it will be very difficult to obtain sufficient shell money to pay for their wives if they have no sisters. The optimal family, therefore, is one in which boys and girls are equally balanced. Infanticide and adoption are employed to approximate this ratio.

The mother has full responsibility for the immediate physical care of her offspring during infancy. For the first few months she permits no one else to handle the infant, but after this she allows her co-wife to give her short respites. She may permit the father, uncle, or aunt to hold the infant for a few moments for their amusement, but she rarely intrusts it to

[40] The above information was obtained from male informants and hence is incomplete and not necessarily reliable.

[41] Informants described this as "when the baby's heart stops beating on the top of his head."

[42] A man observes these same taboos when he plants yams.

578 seems that War wants to kill them, and Wof takes a negative attitude. His garden is next to Yelagu, and if War made a raid, it wouldn't be safe to work there. War then accused Wof of telling the Tug men of War's plans, and thus thwarting his plans because of the close connection between Tug and Yelagu. Wof denied it, and so the argument continues.

114 [372] [136] [576] I went down to Wof's house tonight after supper; people were sitting around the fire burning mosquitoes off their legs with a torch. Wof, who was at the house tamberan called Sin sin sin (greetings) very loudly. Kaya repeated this mockingly.

534 476 April 13, 1937. Afok and Pokotay are helping with the gong. Wof is conspicuously absent. He says he has to look out for food, and it's not his gong anyway. (Strain over the yelagu affair I think). Way is also absent (due to knife stealing I think). I haven't seen him since I got back.

123 863 Chinuwa and Kum slept under the mosquito net enclosing the dining work room in my house last night, and Kum wet the floor. Kwiya and Afinok came this morning and were much upset about this, said they were going to spank Kum for it, and helped clean it up.

859 Marok came into the house and pounded Afi on the back a couple of times asking her what she was doing playing about when she should be working, getting firewood, etc. She ran away and down to the house.

224 784 226 [177] Mes is now our shoot boy, as Nemb has quit. Yesterday Mes killed two gouria pigeons and this morning killed another one. Yat told him that he could not eat any. Mes realized that he should not eat them because he had killed them, but Gwiyap and Mar said that killing them with a muskat was different from killing them with a spear, and that therefore it was all right. Mes was not convinced, however, and this morning he came out with the rationalization that Nemb had continually missed shots because he had eaten birds he had shot.